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New York

President:	Mr. Türk	(Slovenia)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Petrella
	Bahrain	Mr. Buallay
	Brazil	Mr. Fonseca
	Canada	Mr. Fowler
	China	Mr. Qin Huasun
	France	Mr. Dejammet
	Gabon	Mr. Essonghe
	Gambia	Mr. Jagne
	Malaysia	Mr. Hasmy
	Namibia	Mr. Andjaba
	Netherlands	Mr. van Walsum
	Russian Federation	Mr. Gatilov
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Holbrooke

Agenda

Role of the Security Council in the prevention of armed conflicts

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The meeting was resumed at 11.20 a.m., Tuesday, 30 November 1999.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Egypt. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) *(spoke in Arabic):* It gives me great pleasure at the outset to convey to you, Mr. President, my appreciation for giving the States non-members of the Council the opportunity to discuss directly with the Council the issues under consideration.

The issue of the role of the Security Council in the prevention of conflicts, which the President of the Council has chosen to consider in an open debate, is without any doubt one of the most important issues under consideration in the international arena. This question acquires a greater dimension by virtue of the nature of the subjects it raises. It is thus worthwhile to pause and consider this matter and give it the attention it deserves.

Article 1 of the United Nations Charter charges us with preventing conflicts, as this is one of the purposes of the United Nations. The authors of the Charter realized that the prevention of crises was a better and more cost-effective alternative to dealing with conflicts than confronting them after they have taken place. This is particularly true with regard to issues affecting the peace and security of peoples. The authors therefore wisely and appropriately incorporated this principle into the edifice established by the Charter without deviating from it.

In this way, the Charter requires the involvement of all major bodies of the United Nations, and not of the Security Council alone. In fact, the Charter details the role of the major bodies and conveys upon each its own competence to combat and remove the causes that threaten peace and to cooperate to solve the economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems that are usually considered to be the causes of armed conflict.

For example, poverty and ignorance are usually considered to be two of the major causes of conflicts. Nevertheless, we find that dealing with these two issues and remedying them fall within the exclusive competence of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. If we consider the specificity of the tools available to the Security Council and the nature of its role, then we find that these two issues are far from its competence. The Council should therefore deal with these issues in the context of full respect for the delicate system of checks and balances between the major organs of the United Nations as established in the Charter, particularly the General Assembly, in addition to the other bodies within and outside the United Nations.

In accordance with Chapter VI of the Charter, the Security Council may consider any conflict or situation that may lead to international friction or that may give rise to disputes, in order to determine whether the continuation of the conflict or the situation will jeopardize the maintenance of international peace and security. In implementing this provision, the Council has a mandate to take measures to prevent such disputes and situations. Yet, its means to do so are voluntary and fall within the framework of the peaceful resolution of conflicts. This requires absolute respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and non-intervention in their internal affairs by attempting to obtain their approval before adopting or implementing such measures. International practice stresses this interpretation of the Charter.

Chapter VII also enables the Council to assume a preventive role by calling on the parties to a conflict to take interim measures until the dispute is settled peacefully. Problems arise when the Council is either called upon or acts on its own to intervene and deal with situations within its mandate under Chapter VI by using the means provided by Chapter VII. Those Chapter VII provisions pertain to coercive and punitive measures and range from interim measures to the use of force. However, this transcends the authority of the legal system that outlines the elements under which action may be taken and the tools that may be used as established by the Charter in Chapters VI and VII. The structure of the edifice set up by the Charter is based on a careful and clear respect for the dividing line between those two Chapters.

It is therefore absolutely important that the Council's preventive intervention not cause collateral damage to the parties directly involved or to third parties whose interests are linked to one of the parties to the dispute. The Council must give the parties directly involved an opportunity to present their points of view to it before it makes recommendations or implements specific measures. We also call upon the Council to permit States that are not members of the Council and that may believe that their interests may be harmed by the Council's action to discuss the measures under consideration, in accordance with Article 31 of the Charter.

If for whatever reason the Council fails to fulfil its functions, then the only option is to resort to the General Assembly on the basis of the resolution "Uniting for peace". With regard to this resolution and the role of the General Assembly, we are astonished by the approach that has often been followed by some countries in avoiding using this resolution or in ignoring the role of the Assembly, especially since these same countries have occasionally resorted to this approach when their own interests and visions coincided or agreed with the framework of the resolution "Uniting for peace".

The Security Council's endeavours to develop its role in the prevention of conflicts so that it may change its approach from responding to crises to establishing a culture of preventive policies to deal with disputes and defuse them before they become full-fledged conflicts forces all of us here to scrutinize the issue. The Council should work in this context in accordance with the rules accepted by the international community and by all members of the United Nations, and on the basis of commonly agreed principles. We believe that in its work the Council must not take up concepts that do not enjoy full acceptance by Member States, particularly those which remain controversial. Concepts such as humanitarian intervention and humanitarian security could prove to be more harmful than useful. I do not believe that many of us have a specific definition for these and other similar concepts.

On the other hand, the Council should only adopt measures when it determines that a threat to peace exists or that an internal conflict may threaten international peace and security. It should do this in accordance with the provisions of Article 39 and with a full awareness of the serious implications of its actions if it decides to intervene by using force.

The importance of the Council's abiding by this becomes more urgent in the light of the developments that have taken place in the international arena after the end of the cold war, since many of the ongoing armed conflicts are civil wars — intra-State rather than inter-State conflicts.

This in turn raises the question of the United Nations ability to intervene to settle such conflicts. If a decision to intervene is taken, whether at the regional level through regional organizations or at the State level through the United Nations, we must then abide by certain basic elements, prominent among which are the following:

First, there should be no distinction between one region and another, or one country and another. That is to say, all must be treated equally and be accorded the same importance. Currently, this is implemented only after much hardship and pressure.

Secondly, there must be a determination to carry out the task in the face of any obstacles or challenges. Casualties, however large their number and despite their sensitive nature, should not lead to an impasse in peacekeeping operations or in controlling the situation in a specific location and in preventing further deterioration. Hence, no operation should be terminated because there have been casualties, or halted because of certain risks.

Thirdly, the behaviour and commitment of the personnel of peacekeeping forces should not be limited exclusively to upholding the directives and concepts contained in the Secretary-General's bulletin, issued at the beginning of August last, setting guidelines to the rules of international humanitarian law as it relates to peacekeeping operations, on which my delegation had certain reservations. However, this matter falls outside the scope of our discussion today.

The peacekeeping force, or its personnel, should feel that the international community is not just backing them but is also monitoring their performance. Hence any military actions undertaken against them or any threat of action against them will have its consequences. There is no doubt that the tragedy of Srebrenica is one of the elements that compels me to mention this point.

Fourthly, intervention in accordance with Chapter VI or VII of the Charter should not and must not negatively affect the territorial integrity or sovereignty of the State concerned under any circumstances. Many of the practices of the current decade involve many issues that require us to consider, inquire into and analyse their implications.

Fifthly, it is important that the Council not rush to deal with a specific situation from a specific predetermined conception that could eventually lead to serious consequences. Let us take the events that occurred in Bosnia and Herzegovina as an example of what should not be repeated. The Council adopted a resolution under the pretext of halting the confrontation and restricting the ability of the combatants to continue the armed conflict. The resolution prohibited the supply of arms to the two parties despite the fact that one of the two parties — and the Council and its members were fully aware of that — had an overwhelming military superiority, which led to terrible massacres. This

eventually forced the Council, after a period of inaction and flimsy pretexts, to actually intervene on an international level.

The claim that we should let conflicts run their course and be finally resolved in the interest of one party or the other, as some have repeatedly said, should not be the approach adopted by the Council.

We fully understand that what pushed the issue of the prevention of conflicts to the top of our agenda is the Council's desire to deal with the cases that have accompanied international changes. When the situation requires the intervention of the Council and the Council uses the appropriate tools within the proper constitutional and legal framework, the Council will have succeeded in fulfilling its role in the maintenance of international peace and security. I refer here to the success of the Council in dealing with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

What is alarming, however, is when the Council fails to act in matters that require its intervention, as witnessed in the events that took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and others. Yet we must not forget that the Council itself was the real cause of this failure. Many of the obstacles that prevent the United Nations from taking up its role in the maintenance of international peace and security are due to shortcomings in the Council's methods of work. This is manifested in particular in the abuse of the right of the veto, or in the threat of using it, thereby impeding the work of the Council and precluding it from shouldering its responsibilities in accordance with the Charter.

Other problems are double standards, selectivity, lack of transparency and giving priority to the political considerations of Council members, particularly the permanent members, over the collective joint considerations of the members of the Council and of the United Nations as a whole. All this has led the Council to use force outside the legal framework of the Charter of the United Nations, which underlines the pressing need to reform the Council's methods of work.

Expanding the role of the Council under the pretext that the Charter is a flexible document that can always be adapted to deal with what some consider to be urgent needs related to developing situations faces some reservations on our part, and is a matter that should be handled with extreme care.

If a specific international concept is agreed upon, then amending the Charter must become one of the direct priorities of international action, and the issue should not be abandoned because of the difficulty of achieving it. Acting outside the Charter, whatever the considerations that are presented as a justification, will not necessarily lead to preventing the problems and risks that the international community faces today. In fact, it could lead to their exacerbation.

The way to achieve this is to deal not only with the problems of poverty and the need for the economic development of societies but also, and to a great extent, to reform directly the working methods of the Council that prevent it from taking effective action.

We have consistently called for regulating the use of the veto in order to ultimately limit its use to extreme cases and in accordance with objective provisions to be agreed upon.

In brief, the Council must respond to the many voices calling upon it to reform its methods of work. The Council should respond to the recommendations of the General Assembly contained in resolution 51/193, as the Council, with its 15 members, represents the will of the full membership of the United Nations in safeguarding peace and maintaining security in the world, and should bring the necessary transparency to its work, particularly its informal consultations, which occupy most of the time and the debate of the Council.

I would like to refer briefly to the important and effective role played by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. We encourage him to play his role, whatever difficulties may arise, since it stems directly from the Charter. Furthermore, that role should be based on and guided by the Charter. The role of the Secretary-General has become of such great importance — perhaps it has always been so — that we must ensure that he is free from pressure. It is only logical, therefore, within the framework of reforming the United Nations and safeguarding its effectiveness, to consider limiting the Secretary-General to one term of office, although such a term might last for 10 years. In that way he — or she, as the case may be — could undertake his or her responsibilities free from pressure.

In brief, the issue before us should be included in the agendas of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, so that more detailed and comprehensive discussions in those forums can

complement the beneficial initiative of the Council. The responsibilities and mandate of the Council stem from the Charter, and the implementation of the ambitious project formulated by the Secretary-General will require cooperation between the United Nations and the humanitarian protection organizations, because it exceeds the capabilities of the United Nations and the Security Council working alone.

The President: I thank the representative of Egypt for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Liechtenstein. I invite her to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

Mrs. Fritsche (Liechtenstein): We wish to thank and commend you, Mr. President, for your timely initiative to hold an open debate on the role of the Security Council in the prevention of armed conflicts. We fully welcome this debate as a first step in a continuing process which we hope will contribute to the enhancement of the capacities of the Council to fulfil its responsibility to maintain international peace and security. It is clear that prevention must be a key element in the work of the Council. Indeed, Article 1, paragraph 1 of the Charter mandates that "effective collective measures for the prevention ... of threats to the peace" be taken in order to achieve the goal of maintaining international peace and security.

Prevention has thus been given a key position in the conceptual framework of the maintenance of international peace and security by the founders of our Organization. At the same time, it needs to be said that in the practical work of the Council, as well as of other organs of the United Nations, it has so far played only a minor role. The past few years have brought about an increased awareness that addressing root causes must be a crucial consideration in areas such as human rights violations, refugee protection, natural disasters and others. A brutal wake-up call in connection with the importance of prevention was the genocide in Rwanda, where prevention was feasible, but inaction led to the horrific events of 1994. One impetus — maybe the decisive one — to launch the ongoing debate was given by the Secretary-General in his thought-provoking and ground-breaking report on the work of the Organization. We would like to thank the Secretary-General once again for his courage and commitment and to recall the far-reaching role that he is given under Article 99 of the Charter.

The ideas offered by the Secretary-General make it clear that prevention is important with regard not only to armed conflicts but to a wide variety of other areas; hence the call for a culture of prevention. It is of course appropriate that our debate today is focused on the prevention of armed conflicts, given the role of the Council in the area of peace and security. The context within which this debate is taking place, however, is a larger one. Prevention means acting in a timely manner in order to avoid disasters such as armed conflicts altogether, or to minimize their adverse consequences. It requires certain tools, such as effective and reliable early warning mechanisms. But first and foremost it requires political will and the readiness and willingness to realize that prevention is often the best way — sometimes even the only way — to tackle a problem. If it is carried out at an early stage and based on relevant expertise, prevention can be achieved with discretion, efficiency and at low cost. Furthermore, the disastrous consequences of armed conflicts can often be irreversible, and preventing their occurrence is thus the only way to provide effective protection to potential victims.

In the cases where the Council has taken preventive action in the past, it has been quite successful. The United Nations Preventive Deployment Force is a brilliant example of the effectiveness of preventive action and is usually hailed as the first preventive United Nations mission ever. There are, however, some other small missions mandated by the United Nations which have been operational for a long time and have had a considerable preventive effect. Prevention has also been one rationale behind the establishment of the ad hoc Tribunals by the Security Council. The most important goal of the fight against impunity is always the avoidance of the commission of further violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. International law must have an important function in the area of conflict prevention, and the Council has made a significant contribution to this end, not least by helping pave the way for the establishment of an International Criminal Court. Once operational, the International Criminal Court will have a major preventive effect worldwide. Preventive action taken by the Security Council has been selective in the past, but the success connected with these efforts should encourage the Council to expand its activities based on a preventive approach.

We would like to offer several thoughts on how to further enhance the capabilities of the United Nations in the area of the prevention of armed conflicts. The need for enhanced cooperation and coordination with regional

organizations, stated many times in the past in various contexts, becomes particularly obvious in connection with the prevention of armed conflicts. It is clear that regional organizations can and should play a major role through preventive activities if their capabilities in this area are developed accordingly. Avoiding competition between their activities and those carried out by the United Nations, and adapting a pragmatic approach, must be key elements in the joint efforts in this respect.

An enhanced role of the Secretary-General seems to us a further key element of successful United Nations action in the area of prevention. Article 99 of the Charter, which I have already mentioned, gives a legally and politically sound basis for such an enhanced role. The Secretariat should be able to provide the Council with relevant early-warning information collected from various sources, including regional organizations, and with independent assessments on regions and areas where conflicts are emerging. In many cases, most of the relevant information is already available within the United Nations system, but needs to be presented in a compact and meaningful manner and in the right context.

As a final element, we believe that more work needs to be done to provide effective tools to address the root causes of such conflicts. The past few years have been marked by a sharp increase in internal armed conflicts, and tensions among communities and between communities and central governments have time and again proven to be the reasons for these conflicts. We think therefore that it is very timely and necessary for the international community to develop, and indeed to offer, tools by means of which situations of this kind can in the future be addressed more effectively and at an early stage. Liechtenstein presented ideas on the effective and flexible application of the right of self-determination quite some time ago. Those ideas are designed specifically to address such situations in a preventive and pragmatic manner; they are based on existing international law and on dialogue between the parties concerned, and can be carried out, if desirable and requested, with international involvement. This could obviously be done in a very flexible manner and within the framework not only of the United Nations, but also of other intergovernmental organizations which are seized of issues of peace and security. We very much see our ideas in this regard as an element of the ongoing process of enhancing the role of the Organization in the area of prevention.

Creating a culture of prevention is a process requiring a concerted effort by the United Nations membership as a whole, and indeed a change in our collective mindset, which is so deeply immersed in a responsive approach to crisis management. To this end, we should adopt a flexible notion of the term "prevention" comprising activities as diverse as early warning, disarmament measures and post-conflict peace-building. More often than not, prevention will be most successful if it goes almost unnoticed and is carried out with discretion and efficiency. On the one hand, this lack of limelight and headlines connected with effective prevention is probably one of the psychological obstacles which must be overcome. On the other hand, it also constitutes a major strength in that the discretion that comes with it should help overcome the reluctance of those who perceive prevention as intrusive. Collective responsibility for, and thus action on, the consequences of disasters through burden-sharing is, after all, one of the foundations upon which the United Nations is built. Prevention simply means the logical expansion of this collective responsibility to the causes of such disasters, in full accordance with the spirit and the provisions of the United Nations Charter. It seems to us that we can no longer afford not to address the causes of conflicts, and it is our hope that this debate will constitute one of the early stages in a new era of United Nations activities.

The President: I thank the representative of Liechtenstein for the kind words she addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Zambia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kasanda (Zambia): My delegation is pleased to address the Security Council on this important subject: the role of the Security Council in the prevention of armed conflicts. Under Article 24 of the Charter, the Security Council is mandated with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. This debate serves to enhance collective commitment to the pursuit of peace, stability and cooperation among nations.

The African continent has continued to provide one of the greatest challenges for the Security Council insofar as the prevalence of armed conflicts is concerned. Regrettably, this will continue to be so in the foreseeable future if the international community fails effectively to assist Africa to address the causes of armed conflict on the continent.

As many speakers indicated yesterday, in order to address conflict prevention more effectively the Security Council needs to include in its strategy early warning mechanisms, preventive diplomacy and, where possible, preventive deployment and appropriate preventive disarmament. However, as with any other exercise, the timing of those measures is critical to the success of the whole process. The experience in our part of the world, however, is that, despite effective regional efforts with respect to early warning mechanisms and preventive diplomacy, Security Council action either has come too late or has been inadequate. The example of the events prior to the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 is testimony to this.

I wish now to turn to the matter of conflict situations on the African continent. The proliferation of small arms and light weapons has contributed to and prolonged many of the conflicts in Africa. My Government is concerned about the current high level of proliferation of and trafficking in small arms and light weapons in Africa. According to recent statistics released by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, conflicts in Africa have generated more than 8 million of the roughly 22 million refugees in the world. The situation is worse when one takes into account the additional millions who are internally displaced. This stark reality indicates that armed conflicts on the African continent deserve the urgent attention of the international community.

There are clear roles for the Security Council in stopping the flow of the small arms that fuel armed conflict not only in Africa but in many other parts of the world. First, the Security Council, through the creation of appropriate mechanisms, should publicly identify private arms merchants and the zones of conflict that form the markets for their illicit arms. Exposure would constitute international condemnation and censure of these merchants of death and thereby help to stop the trade in this category of weapons. In his report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (S/1998/318), the Secretary-General was unequivocal in urging the Security Council to address this issue of the identification of international arms merchants as a matter of urgent priority. The Security Council would do well to heed the Secretary-General's advice.

The second role is that of strengthening sanctions regimes. In this respect my delegation would like once again to congratulate Ambassador Fowler, the Chairman of the Security Council sanctions Committee relative to UNITA, for breathing new life into the international sanctions against that illegal organization, which has caused so much suffering to the Angolan people and which has contributed to the destabilization of that region of Africa.

Another area that holds a distinct role for the Security Council in the prevention of armed conflict is that of peacekeeping. In this area, the Security Council should as a matter of principle give equal treatment to all conflict situations regardless of the geographical location of the conflict. The Council should be seen to be fair and even-handed as it executes its responsibilities in the maintenance of international peace and security. Last month the Security Council adopted resolutions establishing two peacekeeping missions, one in Sierra Leone and another in East Timor. For Sierra Leone, with an area of 71,740 square kilometres, the Security Council decided that the military component should comprise a maximum of only 6,000 military personnel, including 260 military observers. And yet in the case of East Timor, with an area of less than 5,000 square kilometres, the Council authorized a military contingent of up to 8,950 troops and up to 200 military observers. It is difficult for the Security Council to escape the perception of a double standard in the treatment of conflicts in Africa as opposed to those in other regions of the world.

In this area of preventing and halting conflict, African leaders have shown willingness to take risks for peace. They have taken initiatives to deal with threats to peace and stability on the continent. Through its Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, and along with two subregional groupings — the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) — the Organization of African Unity has succeeded in concluding ceasefire agreements in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Sierra Leone. These initiatives, without doubt, are an indication of the determination of African leaders to search for lasting solutions to the continent's problems.

These efforts, however, are complementary and are not meant to absolve the Security Council of its responsibility for maintaining peace and security in the world, Africa included.

Having authorized a peace Mission for Sierra Leone, the Security Council now has a great opportunity to prevent the crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo from developing into a wider conflagration in Central Africa. As already noted, a Ceasefire Agreement is already in place and the Joint Military Commission (JMC) has begun to lay the basic infrastructure in the

implementation of that Agreement. While on the subject, my delegation expresses gratitude to all those countries that have extended financial support to the Joint Military Commission. The JMC will need continued support from the international community for it to effectively carry out its responsibilities under the Lusaka Agreement.

The successful implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement offers the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its neighbours a chance to enjoy genuine peace and stability. We cannot afford to miss this opportunity. The continued support of the Security Council is therefore not only expected but imperative.

My delegation welcomes the positive steps already taken by the Council relative to United Nations deployment in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I am referring to the Security Council's approval of the deployment of up to 90 military liaison officers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and, as required, to the belligerent and other neighbouring States. Zambia is, however, gravely concerned that the Security Council is not moving quickly enough to authorize the second stage of the deployment of 500 military observers. We believe very strongly that the delay is sending the wrong message to all the parties involved in the conflict. There is a real danger now that the peace process, so delicately nurtured, could unravel.

We call upon the Council to take action on the second stage of the peace process. Indeed, the third stage, involving the creation of a peacekeeping force, is itself unnecessarily being held hostage to preoccupations with demands for security guarantees. The situation on the ground demands quick action by the Security Council in order to prevent the development of a vacuum that could easily be filled by forces working against peace in the region.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo has the largest land mass area in Africa. The nature of the conflict is also complex. Africa expects that the envisaged peacekeeping force to be deployed will be of an appropriate size with a clear mandate. Such a force must be deployed under Chapter VII of the Charter, as envisaged in the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement. Indeed, such a peacekeeping force must be several times larger than that mandated for East Timor. We call upon the Council to summon the necessary political will to also commit the financial resources that will enable such a force to carry out its mandate.

Failure to have a clear mandate for the peacekeeping operation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, failure to have a force strong enough to carry out the mandate and failure to deploy the force under Chapter VII will only serve to reinforce the perception that conflict in Africa does not command the same priority as that attached to hot spots elsewhere in the world.

I would like to conclude my contribution by referring once again to the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. The observations and recommendations made by the Secretary-General in that report continue to be relevant. They provide ready options for the Security Council in its role of enhancing peace and security by preventing armed conflicts.

The President: I thank the representative of Zambia for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Nigeria. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Apata (Nigeria): I wish to congratulate you, Mr. President, on the able manner in which you have presided over the affairs of the Council in the month of November.

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the end of the cold war, a landmark event that brought relief from the tension which characterized the international political system in that era. In spite of the benefit of that epochal event, the decade has regrettably been marred by the proliferation and intensification of intra-State conflicts. These conflicts, although regional in character, have often threatened international peace and security. The wanton destruction of life, the acute refugee crises, the plight of displaced persons and, above all, the destabilization of regional peace and stability should compel all members of the international community to seek appropriate tools to respond adequately to these conflicts.

Nigeria regrets that Africa has a disproportionate share of these conflicts. Yet the region's capacity to effectively resolve these conflicts continues to be undermined by lack of resources and inadequate support from the international community.

The best efforts of the United Nations, which finds itself challenged by the necessity to resolve these conflicts, are usually hindered by lack of financial resources and limited knowledge and familiarity with

local situations. The relative weaknesses of the United Nations on this score should be an added reason for enhanced cooperation with regional and subregional organizations, such as the Economic Community of West African States and the Organization of African Unity.

Ideally, the concept of conflict prevention would be the most efficacious approach for the maintenance of international peace and security. In our increasingly interdependent world and in the wake of the proliferation of armed conflicts, it has become more necessary for the Council to retool existing mechanisms and design innovative early warning systems to nip in the bud situations that would lead to a breach of international peace and security. Experience has shown that the surest and certainly the most cost-effective means of maintaining international peace and security is through the vehicle of preventive diplomacy. However, for the Security Council to enhance its role in the prevention of armed conflicts, it is imperative for the parties to a dispute to demonstrate the necessary political will and for the Council to provide adequate resources to enable the United Nations to respond in a timely fashion with preventive action.

With the benefit of hindsight, we have learned, regrettably, that when preventive action is not taken or is delayed, a dispute leads to the outbreak of armed hostilities, as in the cases of Rwanda, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Kosovo. In this way the credibility of the United Nations is dented, at a time when more is demanded and expected of it.

Even from the point of view of relative human and material cost, prevention proves to be the prudent strategy. According to a recent estimate, the cost to the international community of the seven major conflicts in this decade, the decade of the 1990s, excluding Kosovo and East Timor, was $199 billion, in addition to the unacceptable scale of human casualties. From this example alone, the dividend from preventive diplomacy is self-evident, as it ensures fewer conflicts and lesser humanitarian catastrophes.

Conflict prevention as a major component of the maintenance of peace and security should be accorded the highest priority in the light of the monumental costs of peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building. This reality further underscores the imperative necessity of developing and fine-tuning common indicators for early warning and joint training of staff in the field of conflict prevention.

In this light, the Nigerian delegation proposes that the United Nations should establish a conflict prevention and peace-building budget, similar to the peacekeeping budget. Such a standby financial facility would ensure availability of financial resources to promptly kick-start preventive and peace-making activities.

This would be an improvement on the current situation, in which an appeal for donations has to be made before any significant progress can be recorded in the implementation of peacemaking and peace-building efforts. The current situation in Sierra Leone — where the implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration has to wait for a special appeal fund, which was launched in Geneva on 23 November 1999 — is a clear example. The amount so far contributed to the special appeal fund, which is expected to provide the necessary resources for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, has not been very impressive. If there were a budget in place for conflict prevention and peacemaking, there would most likely be funds available in that budget to enable the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process to get under way.

In conclusion, while Member States of the United Nations must demonstrate greater political will in the area of conflict prevention, the Security Council has a vital role to play in giving preventive action the priority it deserves as the Council discharges its primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security.

The President: I thank the representative of Nigeria for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of New Zealand. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Powles (New Zealand): I would like first of all to congratulate you, Sir, for arranging this open debate. The topic is a vitally important one. The question of how the international community, through collective action, can effectively prevent armed conflict has been much studied and discussed over the past decade.

We remember that at the end of January 1992 the Security Council, meeting for the first time at the level of heads of State or Government, asked the then Secretary-General to prepare recommendations on strengthening the United Nations capacity for preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peacekeeping. The result was "An Agenda for Peace", whose precepts were to be sorely

tested in peacekeeping operations in Bosnia, Rwanda and Somalia. Other contributors on the subject included the then Foreign Minister of Australia, Senator Gareth Evans, who put forward the idea of "cooperative security". A further substantial contribution was made in 1997 by the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict. Among other things the Commission identified some of the chief impediments to preventive action. These included on the one hand a reluctance of countries closest to a conflict to want preventive assistance at the time when it could be most effective and, on the other hand, a certain "intervention fatigue" on the part of those States most capable of offering assistance.

Most recently we have to hand the valuable action plan offered by the Swedish Government in the pamphlet "Preventing violent conflict", written against the background of the human catastrophe in Kosovo. At the regional level, the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum is doing important work on the concepts and principles of preventive diplomacy. This renewed focus and discussion, including today's open debate, is most timely, given the events of this year now almost passed and the considerable resurgence in United Nations peacekeeping.

The United Nations Charter clearly envisages a strong conflict-prevention role for this Organization. Article 1, paragraph 1, speaks of "effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace". The second part of this paragraph also envisages the "adjustment or settlement" by peaceful means of "disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace".

The Security Council is given primary — but not exclusive — responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It exercises this responsibility on behalf of the wider membership. In Article 33 an impressive bag of tools is provided within the Charter for the peaceful settlement of disputes. These include "negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements", and so forth. The Security Council is also empowered, under Article 34, to investigate any dispute or situation which might give rise to a dispute that might endanger international peace and security.

The provisions of Chapter VII give the Security Council enormous powers to deal with threats to the peace or acts of aggression, and they impose serious obligations on the wider membership to assist the Council. Finally, the Secretary-General is given a particular role under Article 99, a role that would seem quite relevant to the idea of "early warning" so often mentioned in discussions of preventive diplomacy. He is able to bring any matter that in his opinion may threaten international peace and security to the attention of the Council.

The Charter, although more than half a century old, therefore contains a comprehensive, relevant and entirely practical set of options for conflict prevention, in the Articles I have referred to and elsewhere. And it empowers the Council, primarily, to use them. If the Security Council has failed to carry out its responsibilities effectively in the past, it would not seem to be a failure of system design but a consequence of other factors.

Two key factors of course are political will and resources. Member States look to the Council members to show leadership, given their special responsibilities. This includes, at the very least, timely, complete and unconditional payment of assessed contributions. It also includes a willingness on the part of Council members to ensure that the United Nations will have the wherewithal to do the job that has been mandated, whether it is sufficient troops to defend a "safe area" or money to pay for the restoration of public services in post-conflict peace-building under the Council's mandate.

There is also a view that the Council's effectiveness in conflict prevention is hindered by its working methods. The Council does so much of its work these days, perhaps 90 per cent, through informal consultations. Non-members do not have access. We are aware that among some Security Council members there is concern that this practice denies the Council the opportunity to invite representatives of States directly affected by a matter which the Council is considering to participate in substantive discussion of it. We can also envisage that there might be occasions when the chance for Council members to deliver a strong, collective and private view directly to the parties to a dispute could be a very useful step towards resolving it.

Finally there is that old incubus, the veto. As so many speakers observed during the general debate of the General Assembly, this instrument wreaked havoc on the Council's conflict-prevention capacity in 1999. It started with the untimely termination of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP), a successful preventive-deployment mission in a highly sensitive area. It exerted its unwelcome influence when

the Council was by-passed in the decision by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to bomb Yugoslavia. And it dogs the Council's efforts to arrive at a new weapons-inspection regime to replace the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM), which departed Iraq before Operation Desert Fox almost a year ago.

Against these persistent negative features, which we hope can be resolved in the future, I am pleased to say that from my delegation's perspective there have also been some very positive developments in the Council's recent handling of its conflict-prevention responsibilities. Perhaps the highlight was the rapid dispatch of a mission of the Security Council to Indonesia and to East Timor in response to the violence following the popular consultation. The mission was a crucial step in helping to end the bloodshed. And we acknowledge as we have before the distinguished leadership of the Permanent Representative of Namibia. The authorization of the multinational International Force, East Timor (INTERFET) — and, subsequently, of the Transitional Administration and peacekeeping force within it — were also done by the Council as quickly as the extraordinary requirements of one member's legislature would allow.

New Zealand will remain a significant contributor to INTERFET and to the peacekeeping operation that will succeed it, we hope very soon. While we are speaking on the subject of East Timor we would like to take the opportunity to congratulate Ambassador Holbrooke on his very recent personal contribution to efforts to ease the plight of East Timorese refugees in Indonesia. And, regarding a completely different theatre, we also wish to acknowledge the efforts of Ambassador Fowler, as chair of the Angola sanctions Committee, to investigate the illegal trade in diamonds and arms that has brought so much misery to that region.

While the Council has primary responsibility for international peace and security, there are other important actors within the system. There is a strong link between international peace and security, on the one hand, and disarmament and development on the other. If, as we believe the Charter intends, "international peace and security" is to mean more than the absence of war or even an absence of the threat of war, the contributions of the other organs of the United Nations, including the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, are of obvious importance in laying the foundations which are necessary.

Finally, there is the role of the Secretary-General's special political missions. These are typically small-scale but effective interventions, such as the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville (UNPOB), Papua New Guinea. UNPOB and the regionally provided Peace Monitoring Group play a critical confidence-building and indeed conflict-prevention role as the parties to the dispute engage on the political issues concerned.

The Carnegie Commission, in its 1997 *Final Report* on preventing deadly conflict, wrote of the need to create a culture of prevention. This included such measures as preventive diplomacy and early warning to deal with imminent violence, and other measures, such as the promotion of well-being and justice, to deal with the root causes of violence. There can be no institution better placed than the United Nations to take on this multifaceted task. We look forward to the Security Council's continuing to carry out its key leadership role on behalf of Member States as part of this endeavour.

The President: I thank the representative of New Zealand for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Bangladesh. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): There has been express need for holding open discussions on the role of the Council in the prevention of armed conflicts. Several considerations have made this expedient. We appreciate the initiative taken in this regard by Slovenia and the wise leadership provided by you, Mr. President.

We thank the Secretary-General for the very important statement he made yesterday as we commenced this debate. His statement contains a number of specific suggestions which should receive the Council's attention, in particular the one relating to the expert working group on early warning.

The political, humanitarian and economic imperatives of conflict prevention do not require elaboration in this forum. I shall limit my observations to a few suggestions and some interrogations.

First, the Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It is also mandated to ensure prompt and effective action. There is considerable international public opinion behind the demand that the Council be proactive

and play an avant-garde role in matters of international peace and security. It is expected that the Council's role should be visible before a situation develops into a crisis; before hostile campaigns degenerate into armed conflicts; before a carnage has taken place; before a war has broken out. It should be there in the true realization of its responsibility.

The role of the regional organizations is recognized in the Charter. In recent years, these organizations have played a critically important role in preventing or containing armed conflicts. But then, the Council has been criticized for subcontracting its peace and security ...ission. We believe that such a perception requires our serious attention in the context of our debate today. We must examine the benefits of formulating appropriate mechanisms and elaborate policy guidelines for the involvement and intervention of the regional organizations. They must, of course, be specific to a given situation.

In this context, we encourage the initiatives of the Secretary-General in pursuing preventive action. While such traditional instruments as good offices, mediation and conciliation may be tried as the case may be, we would support more vigorous actions by the Secretary-General.

Secondly, the question of sovereignty is one with which the Council will be increasingly confronted. For us, the question would be how to balance between the principles of political independence, sovereign equality and territorial integrity of States and the humanitarian and legal imperatives of maintaining international peace and security. The two imperatives are not necessarily contradictory. The Charter, in my reading, tends to treat them as complementary. The task before us would be to find out the parameters of this complementarity.

There is a difference of opinion on how to address intrastate conflict which the Charter does not seem to have envisaged. What should the United Nations do with a State in civil war, a country plunged into intractable ethnic strife, a failed State? The preventive measures prescribed in Chapter VI are subject to the consent of the parties involved. What happens when the parties remain determined to fight out their claims or control? What happens when the leaders in a given State fail their people? When they violate the provisions of humanitarian law? When they disregard the recommendations of the Council?

In this context, I wonder if we should not rethink the way the question of peace and security is addressed. The responsibility of actors within States has to be determined and necessary redress should be available. The United Nations cannot keep a peace that does not exist, as the Secretary-General said. The international community cannot be expected to pay for wars of attrition fought in total disregard for law and civilized norms. A global consensus should be reached on the evolving concepts and mechanisms to address these complex situations.

Thirdly, on the question of uniformity and consistency in practice, the protection of the Security Council should be available equally to all. To be credible, the Council must be guided by a consistent approach in addressing all conflicts. To be effective, it should work on both current and potential threats to peace. To be true to its purposes and functions, it should use all the power and authority conferred upon it by the Member States.

Fourthly, on the question of delayed action, the Secretary-General's exasperation in quoting from *Hamlet* is understandable. The Council has been discredited in world public opinion in this regard. The United Nations rapid-deployment capacity should be enhanced. The Council should employ all the instruments and measures available and adopt newer and innovative strategies within the purview of the Charter provisions. The credibility of the Council must not be further compromised by its failure to act promptly, effectively and consistently. The impediments to the proper functioning of the Council should be identified, analysed and debated.

Fifthly, the Secretary-General has proposed the institution of a culture of prevention. A comprehensive approach to the prevention of conflicts may be taken through the implementation of the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace. Success will depend on the United Nations system-wide integration of the Programme of Action and national implementation, as well as on the active participation of civil society and the media. Bangladesh believes that international peace and security can best be strengthened not by the actions of States alone, but through the inculcation of a culture of peace and non-violence in every human being and in every sphere of our activity. We regard the culture of peace as an effective expedient to minimize and prevent violence and conflict in the present-day world. My delegation strongly recommends that the culture of peace be given due consideration in the context of conflict prevention.

Finally, with respect to the role of the Council in relation to those of other major organs, it is often said

that the United Nations success is more pronounced in the economic and social areas than in the field of peace and security. The Council's primary responsibility notwithstanding, its role should be seen within the broad framework of the principles and purposes of the United Nations, in which specific roles are assigned to each of the principal organs. Their contribution should converge on the goal of the common progress of mankind in a world of peace.

The multiplicity of crises and conflicts across the world in the past decades reveals a different reality. We are far from achieving our objective of building the foundation of sustainable peace. The role of the Council in conflict prevention in the medium- and long-term perspective should also be seen in this broad framework.

The human and the material price of wars should serve as pointers in our policy decisions. In today's world the narrow national-interest-centric approach to crises and conflicts is certainly anachronistic. We cannot adopt the policies of the nineteenth century in today's globalized and interdependent world.

In conclusion, I would say that giving priority to dispute resolution and conflict prevention goes to the heart of equipping the United Nations for taking its rightful place as the pre-eminent cooperative security institution in the post-cold-war era.

The President: I thank the representative of Bangladesh for his kind words addressed to me and my delegation.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Senegal. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Ka (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): As this is the first time I have addressed the Security Council under your presidency, Sir, I should like first to congratulate you on your assumption of your important post, and repeat my delegation's commendation of your personal commitment and the commitment of your country, Slovenia, to the attainment of the noble objectives of the United Nations Charter.

Your welcome and timely initiative to include on the Council's agenda the item we are discussing today stems from that commitment. By organizing this discussion you have sought not merely to stimulate discussion about the activity and the role of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security, of which prevention is an essential part, but also to create a climate conducive to improving transparency in the work of the Council, something rightly sought by many countries that are not members of the Council.

This debate arises from one of the relevant issues raised by the Secretary-General in his report (S/1998/318) on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, which was that since the establishment of the United Nations conflict prevention has been, as it remains, a source of major concern, even if circumstances have considerably changed its nature. When the idea of preventive diplomacy was introduced by a former Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjöld, it was closely linked to the threat of a nuclear escalation between the two super-Powers. Today we must recognize that this idea of preventive diplomacy is no longer, *mutatis mutandis*, the monopoly of professional diplomats and military experts alone.

Over the years its scope has expanded considerably, following the proliferation of inter-State and domestic conflicts, which are in many respects the main causes of the destabilization of States and the causes of humanitarian disasters. Therefore, the United Nations — particularly the Security Council, which bears the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security — has sought to improve considerably its methods and strategies for conflict prevention.

The push towards joint coordinated action, which emerged at the end of the cold war, is gaining ground and strength at all levels: international, regional and subregional. The need to act is becoming increasingly imperative as the list of the new generation of intra-national conflicts, particularly in Africa, is growing with the ever-lengthening procession of civilian victims, refugees and displaced persons.

The painful and tragic events of Rwanda, and to a lesser extent in Somalia, have also helped make the international community more aware of the urgent need to consolidate domestic peace and to prevent the risk of violent conflict breaking out again.

In view of the emergence of new intra-State and inter-State conflicts, and given the re-emergence of old conflicts, with their aftermath of displaced persons, and the need to preserve political stability and ensure the

economic development of the African continent, nothing, we feel, is more important than to focus on the prevention of conflicts in order to create the conditions for lasting peace in Africa.

However, this awareness of the need to prevent the outbreak or worsening of violent conflicts led African leaders to organize flexible mechanisms for the prevention and management of conflicts at the continental and subregional levels. African leaders increasingly believe that the international community must give substantial support to their laudable efforts to prevent African crises and that it has no choice but to react to existing crises. It is in this context that we welcome the initiative taken by Japan, which organized in January 1998, in Tokyo, a conference on preventive strategy, whose recommendations need to be revisited, pursued and amplified.

In the ongoing search for a solution to what appears to be a global threat, because peace and security are a concern and a challenge for both the South and the North, the recurrent question is whether it is possible to think today of an effective conflict-prevention policy to prevent conflicts without directly tackling other important questions intrinsically linked with it.

In his report of 13 April 1998 on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, the Secretary-General rightly recognized that the prevention of conflict was not an end in itself and that it must take into account and incorporate the various functions of peace-building and political and humanitarian activities designed to root out the underlying causes of conflict: economic destitution, social injustice and political oppression.

In this context, I wish to make the following comments.

Today we all recognize the close correlation between the need for peace and the objectives of sustainable harmonious economic development. We agree that development can only be effectively attained in an environment of peace, security and stability. Likewise, the results obtained in the development process may easily be jeopardized by instability or lack of peace. Poverty, disease, famine and oppression are still ravaging the world, as evidenced by the millions of refugees and displaced persons. These problems are both the source and the consequences of armed conflict. The attention given to them by the Security Council must not slacken, and efforts devoted to them must remain an absolute priority.

The thorny question of illicit trafficking in and increasing circulation of small arms is a challenge to us all, and we need to move beyond sterile debates about the misleading question of whether these arms are the cause or the consequence of conflicts.

In this respect, it is undeniable that today everyone agrees that the flow of weapons feeds and increases insecurity and leads to the outbreak of conflict. The increasingly systematic use of weapons causes the militarization of part of the civilian population, which ultimately creates a new equation of force between the various groups and takes them, de facto, away from the framework of negotiation. These new armed civilian actors often weaken existing institutions and pose a long-term threat to peace and stability in the regions where they operate.

Controlling, restricting and limiting the illicit trafficking in weapons is therefore a priority within the context of conflict prevention, and the international community must give special attention to this problem. Obviously the ideal approach would be to develop within the framework of the United Nations an international treaty limiting conventional arms transfers. That is why my country, Senegal, strongly supports the convening in the year 2001 of an international conference on all aspects of illicit trafficking in and proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

It is useful to recall here that in his "Agenda for Peace", published in January 1995, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General at that time, proposed the establishment of "micro-disarmament", based on the collection and subsequent destruction of stockpiles to prevent their reuse. In November 1998, the member countries of the Economic Community of West African States, aware of the magnitude of this scourge, decided on a moratorium on the import and export of small arms.

The third comment I would like to make is based on a logical approach. In order to prevent armed conflict, should we not establish a special fund with the sole purpose of supporting strategies of preventive diplomacy? Such a fund would finance prevention mechanisms that are already operational in various subregions of the world, rather than spending vast sums on peacemaking, peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building operations.

Conflict prevention has become an absolute priority for the African continent, which is paying a high price for its armed conflicts. That is why in 1993 the

Organization of African Unity (OAU) established its Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, which also has a Peace Fund designed precisely to finance African capacity-building for conflict prevention and settlement.

I wish to pay tribute here to the many donor countries that have lent assistance to the OAU in pursuit of this goal. I should also like to thank the Governments of the United States of America, the United Kingdom and France for their commitment to African countries, under the tripartite initiative known as RECAMP, designed for swift, effective intervention in peacemaking and peacekeeping operations, as well as in emergency humanitarian relief operations. Other such initiatives will always be welcome if they remain open to any African State that wishes to participate in them.

Conflict prevention is a very complex field. It requires both the mobilization of various actors and the combination of various political, economic and social factors. It requires a comprehensive, concerted and resolute approach and the participation of the various United Nations bodies, each operating in its area of competence.

One of the major challenges to be faced in the next century and one of the key sectors where Member States must pool their ideas in order to strengthen the credibility of the Organization in the twenty-first century definitely relates to the capacity of our Organization to establish a flexible, open mechanism, responsible on a permanent basis for alerting the international community to potential crisis situations in the world and for recommending appropriate emergency measures.

At the end of this twentieth century, we must recognize ultimately that our culture of reaction to crises that shake the world must be replaced by another type of culture, one of crisis prevention. Today's discussion must help us delineate the contours of this important matter, which in our view must remain on the agenda of the Security Council.

The President: I thank the representative of Senegal for his kind words addressed to me and to my delegation.

The next speaker is the representative of Norway. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): According to one estimate, 5.5 million people have died in war during the 1990s. Many more have had their lives ruined. The vast majority of these conflicts occur in the developing world, where many countries also have taken on a heavy burden by accepting refugees from conflicts in neighbouring nations, often without receiving due credit for their efforts. Norway has no doubt that the international community needs to pay far more attention and direct far more resources to resolving the many conflicts hampering development, creating human suffering and burdening the response capacity of developing nations, not least in Africa.

We are convinced that preventing conflicts clearly contributes to lasting and sustainable development, just as poverty alleviation and social progress may reduce the risk of war and conflicts. It goes without saying that the United Nations and the Security Council have a pivotal role to play in this regard.

I would therefore like to express Norway's appreciation, Mr. President, for your timely initiative and for the opportunity to participate in this important debate on the role of the Security Council in the prevention of armed conflicts. Norway welcomes the measure of transparency and openness involved in allowing non-Council members to present their views and to inspire fresh ideas in open thematic debates like this one. We encourage the Council to further expand the practice of meeting in open formats rather than behind closed doors.

There can be no doubt about Norway's commitment to upholding the primary role and responsibility of the Security Council in the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security. The Security Council, acting on behalf of the universal membership of the United Nations, has been given the pre-eminent position and obligation to take effective and collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to peace, in accordance with the United Nations Charter.

Early consideration and preventive action by the Security Council in disputes or potential conflict situations should thus remain the primary instrument of the international community's conflict prevention efforts as we enter a new century. The higher the readiness of the Council for preventive action, the more likely it is that disputes can be settled peacefully, in accordance with Article 33 of the Charter.

The role of the Secretary-General is vital in this regard. The Secretary-General, being provided the possibility, in Article 99 of the Charter, to bring to the attention of the Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security, has a crucial early warning function in crisis situations. Norway shares the view that the preventive capacity of the Secretary-General should be strengthened further, including through the allocation of human and financial resources. To assist in this regard, Norway has contributed to the Trust Fund for Preventive Action, with a total of $4 million since 1996. In addition, in the same period, Norway has also contributed some $4 million to other trust funds and activities of the United Nations Secretariat related to conflict prevention worldwide.

Preventive diplomacy and peacemaking are highly cost-effective activities for the maintenance of international peace and security. The financing of this activity should no longer be dependent on exchange rate gains, vacancy rate management and trust funds. Norway therefore welcomes the inclusion in the Programme Budget for 2000 and 2001 of funds for special political missions, which Norway considers to be of great importance.

Preventive deployment and preventive disarmament are other strategies that have proved successful in later years. Norway participated from the beginning with peacekeeping troops in the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) in Macedonia, the first preventive United Nations deployment mission ever. Norway supports efforts to combat the illicit proliferation of small arms and the various initiatives to curtail this lethal trade that are currently being pursued within the United Nations and elsewhere.

Norway believes in continued efforts to counter the culture of impunity for serious violations of humanitarian law. The International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia represent important new building blocks in international jurisprudence with regard to the prosecution of the most serious international crimes. The experience obtained is also a stepping stone towards the establishment of the International Criminal Court, in accordance with the Rome Statute. Norway urges all States to ratify the Rome Statute in order to ensure early establishment of the Court. The existence of a permanent, global institution of this kind will significantly enhance deterrence against the most heinous international crimes.

As current Chairman-in-office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Norway has worked to develop further cooperation with the United Nations. Close and cooperative relations between the United Nations and regional organizations in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter is of paramount importance to successful conflict prevention internationally.

Norway has a long tradition of assisting efforts at development and poverty alleviation in developing countries, both bilaterally and through the United Nations. Furthermore, we are actively involved in efforts to provide humanitarian relief and assistance in solidarity with the victims of natural disasters, wars, and other violent conflicts. And we have been engaged in various peace and reconciliation processes in conflict areas around the world.

Increasingly, we have realized the need for an integrated approach to our peace and development efforts. Conflict prevention, humanitarian aid and development assistance must go hand in hand. We must deal with the root causes of conflict, not just the symptoms. Effective crisis management and long-term conflict prevention must include assistance in promoting lasting and sustainable development, combating poverty and relieving poor countries of their unsustainable debt burden, as well as efforts to promote democratic and economic reforms, good governance and human rights.

Norway has adopted a national strategy combining humanitarian assistance, including demining, with conflict prevention, peace and reconciliation, and development. We will be proactive in the further development of coordinated efforts. We must involve bilateral donors, multilateral organizations like the United Nations and its agencies, regional organizations, and national Governments in constructive partnerships.

Unless we can devise approaches to prevent conflicts and foster reconciliation, our development efforts will be undermined or even reversed. Building a culture of prevention is not easy. But the approach taken by the Secretary-General, notably in his report on Africa, is without doubt a most constructive way forward. Poverty, underdevelopment and violent conflicts are closely linked. We cannot address one without addressing the others.

The President: I thank the representative of Norway for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran. I invite

him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, allow me at the outset to extend to you my delegation's appreciation for taking the initiative of organizing this open debate on the very important issue of the role of the Security Council in the prevention of armed conflicts. We recognize and warmly commend your efforts to promote the transparency of the work of the Council.

The recent increase in the number of armed conflicts is a source of great concern for the international community as a whole. Referring to the outbreak or new eruption of numerous armed conflicts in various parts of the world in 1998, the Secretary-General, in his latest annual report, raised the possibility that a gradual but hopeful trend towards a world with fewer and less deadly wars was coming to an end. He also pointed out that the impact of wars on civilians had worsened because internal wars, now the most frequent type of armed conflict, typically take a heavier toll on civilians than inter-State wars.

Given the gravity of the situation, there is an urgent need for new emphasis on developing more effective preventive strategies, on the one hand, and improving the functioning of the existing mechanisms, on the other. Preventive actions, including fact-finding, early warning, mediation and negotiation, as well as preventive deployment and preventive disarmament, are the main short- and medium-term strategies for preventing disputes from escalating into war, and preventing earlier wars from erupting again. In the long term, however, it is crucial to reflect on ways and means of creating a world of peace by eliminating the root causes of instability through addressing effectively the problems of an economic, social and cultural character.

In this context, the responsibility of the Security Council in preventing armed conflicts continues to take on more importance in the light of the changes that have taken place since the end of the cold war and in the light of the increase in the number of armed conflicts. The role of the Council in this field needs to be considered in the framework of its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, its relationship with the other organs of the United Nations, the system of collective security established by the Charter and the process of its decision-making.

The inability of the Council to address a number of key security issues in the past year is cause for deep concern. Crises in which Council action is blocked by lack of agreement among the five permanent members or in which deep divisions persist undermine the Council's effectiveness. Moreover, in the discharge of its primary responsibility, it is important that the Council react in time and that it act expeditiously in response to crisis situations. We have observed that there is sometimes a tendency on the part of the Council to allow situations to deteriorate to the point of causing great loss of life, and sometimes even large-scale humanitarian disasters.

The Council needs to build upon its experiences in the field of peace and security. Peacekeeping operations launched by the Council constitute one of those areas where we have witnessed some positive developments, including the increased and regular interaction of troop contributors with the Council on peacekeeping the subject of peacekeeping missions. However, the issue of delayed reimbursement for peacekeeping costs, as well as delays in establishing peacekeeping missions in response to crisis situations following the establishment of their appropriate mandates, needs to be addressed.

The threat of allowing financial considerations to influence decision-making on whether and how to respond to clear threats to international peace and security is a matter of great and growing concern. It can weaken the Council's authority and that of the Secretary-General in the planning and implementation of peacekeeping operations.

There is a general perception that a uniform standard is lacking in responding to the outbreak of conflicts in all parts of the world. It is disturbing that the Security Council has sometimes been too slow in responding to the conflicts in Africa and in some other areas, and too inadequate in committing itself in terms of the measures and resources it has authorized to address these problems.

For instance, in our area, the situation in Afghanistan — where violence and bloodshed have continued for years, drug cultivation and trafficking have endangered all its neighbours directly and Europe indirectly, and hundreds of thousands of people are stranded in the northern mountains without shelter or means of sustaining themselves in the treacherous early winter of Afghanistan — deserves more thorough attention from the Security Council. The problem of extremism and terrorism stemming from the Taliban is

undoubtedly a very important destabilizing factor that requires a decisive response by the Security Council. However, terrorism is an anomaly of the general chaos and bloodshed in Afghanistan.

To address only the problem of terrorism would be a half-hearted and limited approach by the Security Council, and, while it might correspond to some immediate concerns of some permanent members of the Council, it would not address the larger problem for the Afghan people and for the region. The problem in Afghanistan requires a concerted and comprehensive approach by the Security Council; a piecemeal approach can hardly prove successful. It would be difficult to assume that if a problem of the nature and duration of that of Afghanistan had taken place in Europe, the Security Council would have reacted in a similar fashion.

Due to the necessity of more harmonized and effective cooperation among the principal organs of the United Nations in preventing armed conflicts, consideration should also be given to reviewing the Council's relations with other principal organs, especially the General Assembly. We believe it is essential to achieve the delicate balance enshrined in the Charter in the relationship between the Assembly and the Council. The Council should have greater accountability to the Assembly for decisions affecting the interests of all. Therefore, we would urge the Security Council, in its discharge of that primary responsibility, to be responsive to the comments and discussions in the General Assembly. Such responsiveness could secure and reinforce a healthy constitutional relationship between the two principal organs.

The Secretary-General, in his peacemaking activities and efforts aimed at minimizing and removing the causes of armed conflicts, requires the full support and cooperation of the Council. Moreover, we are of the view that the Council ought to encourage contributions by individual Member States or groups of States that have special interests in particular crisis situations, such as the various contact groups on various issues.

In our opinion, the way the Council deals with situations and makes decisions is of great importance. My delegation strongly believes in the need for the Council to obtain direct information from the parties concerned, including through their direct involvement in the discussions of the Council. The process of consultations, interactions and exchanges between the Council, the States that are directly involved in a particular issue before the Council and other concerned parties needs to be enhanced with a view to contributing to improving the decision-making process of the Council. To this end, we also support the proposal to engage the representatives of concerned States that are not members of the Council in the informal consultations of the Council.

The Council's occasional paralysis on some important issues ought to be blamed at least in part on the decision-making process in the Council. Such paralysis is injurious to the Council's credibility and effectiveness and has serious implications for the maintenance of international peace and security.

It cannot be denied that much of the impasse in, and paralysis of, the Council has to do with one aspect of its decision-making process: the use or threat of use of the veto power. That was at the core of the Council's inaction in the face of the Kosovo tragedy, which prompted the use of force without the authorization of the Council. Clearly, the issue of veto will have to be seriously reconsidered and ways found to at least manage it better, if the Council is to function effectively in preventing and dealing with armed conflicts. In this context, I wish to recall the position of the Non-Aligned Movement, which seeks to limit the exercise of the veto with a view to its eventual elimination.

The situation in Kosovo led us to reflect on the growing danger of seeing regional organizations go beyond the role envisaged for them by the Charter. Bypassing the United Nations in the use of force constitutes a serious violation of the United Nations Charter and the rules of international law, and runs counter to the status of the Security Council as the organ with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. While regional organizations have a role in peacekeeping under the Charter, this should not lead to the erosion of the Council's unique role. Therefore additional efforts need to be made to ensure that cooperation by regional organizations is in strict compliance with the Charter of the United Nations and that the primacy of the responsibility of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security is not impaired.

The President: I thank the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Pakistan. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Haque (Pakistan): We are happy, Sir, to see you preside over this important meeting.

At the end of the cold war, people all over the world had a vision of a new international order based on justice and equity. They hoped for peace, stability and prosperity. Unfortunately, that vision is fast fading, and those hopes remain unfulfilled. In the post-cold-war era, the world continues to witness internecine and inter-State conflicts. It has witnessed cruelty, killings and massacres which only human beings are capable of and on a scale which is truly staggering.

There can therefore be no disagreement as to the necessity and urgency of minimizing the prospects of conflicts and of creating a peaceful global environment for the progress and prosperity of mankind.

The question is whether conflicts and their attendant devastation are preventable. The answer, to my mind, is that it may not be possible to prevent conflicts all the time, but, given a sufficient degree of commitment, concern, engagement, objectivity and even-handedness by the international community, most outbreaks of conflict are preventable, and the fear of an occasional failure cannot be allowed to deter the international community from its determination to free the world from the scourge of war.

Effective conflict-prevention strategies would save lives as well as the billions of dollars spent on waging war and on the rehabilitation and reconstruction required after the death, destruction and displacement caused by such conflicts. According to a recent report, the costs of the seven major wars of the 1990s were estimated at approximately $200 billion. This must really be a very conservative figure and probably does not take into account the huge human costs and the costs of reconstruction and rehabilitation, which are much more than those wasted in the actual waging of a war.

Consider for a moment the positive changes such large amounts could have brought about in the lives of millions in the developing world if these resources had been used for equitable development in conflict-prone countries and other developing nations. And most bitter is the fact that most, if not all, of these conflicts are occurring in the developing countries, destroying their economies and blighting the lives of their peoples. If peace and development are indeed indivisible, as we do not tire of reminding ourselves, the international community must bend its efforts and devote its resources to the economic development of the developing countries in order to promote international peace and prevent conflicts.

Any prescription for conflict prevention has to be multidimensional, since there are no single-cause explanations of conflicts, whether inter-State or intra-State. While in the short term preventive diplomacy and preventive deployment should be the primary areas of focus for the international community, we believe that the concept of so-called preventive disarmament must be examined with the utmost care, since such a concept could militate against the inherent right to self-defence sanctified by the Charter of the United Nations and is most likely to be applied against the small and the weak. We must also remind ourselves constantly that any strategy for conflict prevention can be durable only if it addresses the root causes and not merely the symptoms of armed conflict. It would be delusional for us to believe otherwise.

The efforts towards prevention of conflict must therefore focus on resolving fundamental problems. These could be political, economic, social, cultural or humanitarian. In this context, it is worth recalling that the areas of responsibility of the different organs of the United Nations have been clearly delimited in the Charter. The limits established by the Charter must be scrupulously adhered to and respected. While there is a need for greater coordination, there should be no attempt at encroachment. All organs of the United Nations must play mutually supportive roles, as envisaged in the Charter.

We believe that the international community must evolve a set of ground rules on conflict prevention. In our view, these rules should include the following.

First, when preventive measures are being considered, the principle of State sovereignty and non-interference and non-intervention in the internal affairs of sovereign States must be respected. However, this principle cannot and must not be extended to situations where people under colonial rule, foreign occupation or alien domination are struggling for their inalienable right to self-determination.

Second, conflict prevention must be based on the principles of collective security defined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Third, the central role of the General Assembly as the only body with universal representation in the United

Nations system must be respected and maintained. It appears that in recent years the Security Council has, at times, sought to assume jurisdiction over some of the tasks assigned to other bodies of the United Nations, or at least to set the direction for them by the simple expedient of establishing a linkage, howsoever tenuous, with international peace and security and proceeding to adopt resolutions or presidential statements on the subject. The Security Council must resist this temptation.

Fourth, unfortunately, the Security Council has not always acted on the basis of the objective requirements of a situation. It has failed, for example, to address some ongoing conflicts — conflicts with massive human suffering and systematic violations of international humanitarian law. The general impression that the Council applies different standards to conflicts in different parts of the world must not be allowed to become a general conviction.

Fifth, the Secretary-General must play his role in conformity with the responsibilities entrusted to him by the Charter, particularly in situations in which massive violations of human rights occur against people under colonial rule or foreign occupation and in which there is a threat to international peace and security. Sixth, an effective early warning system should be evolved with a view to identifying prospective conflict areas without any distinction as to geographical location or the socio-economic background or ethno-cultural identity of the people. Existing United Nations methods of gathering information should be reviewed so as to ensure that information collected is credible and non-discriminatory.

Seventh, as I said earlier, the underlying causes and not the symptoms of conflicts and disputes must be addressed. Particular attention should be paid to resolving outstanding disputes which pose a serious threat to international peace and security. The protracted conflict over the illegal occupation of Jammu and Kashmir by India and the denial of the right of the people of that territory to determine their own future, a problem which has remained unresolved for over 50 years and poses a serious threat to international peace and security, is one such example. The Security Council must work for the early resolution of that and other similar disputes in accordance with its own resolutions on the subject.

Eighth, all bilateral disputes between States are by definition international disputes. Any deviation from this fundamental principle of international law would be discriminatory, unjust and contrary to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Ninth, the threats to peace and security brought to the attention of the Security Council for possible preventive action must be discussed in open meetings with the full participation of all interested parties. Tenth, the Security Council may consider preventive deployment, if required, in conflict areas, particularly in Africa, on the lines of the preventive deployment in the case of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Eleventh, the Security Council should consider the possibility of adopting preventive measures under Chapter VII of the Charter, only after all other means at the disposal of the United Nations have been exhausted and after a thorough examination of the adverse impact of such measures on the people of the targeted country, as well as on the neighbouring States. It must also devise measures to alleviate the resultant economic difficulties for the people of the affected countries. Twelfth, while cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations should be improved, most such organizations can play only a limited role in the prevention of armed conflict. In any event, all actions by regional organizations must be in consonance with Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter.

The need for a coordinated effort for conflict prevention by the United Nations system is far greater now than ever before because of the complex nature of conflicts and their potential for widespread damage and destruction. The key to better management of the problems of international peace and security lies in a shared responsibility between the General Assembly, the Security Council and other organs, as provided for in the Charter of the United Nations. Unfortunately, on occasion the Security Council has been unwilling or unable to fulfil its responsibilities, either because of the use of the veto or because it has lacked the collective will to implement its own resolutions. This must be rectified to enhance the credibility of the Council.

We also believe that members of the international community and the Security Council must exercise great care, caution and circumspection in labelling situations as threats to international peace and security. In assessing whether certain situations require preventive measures, the distinction between crises which constitute threats to international peace and security and those which do not is of vital importance and determines which organ of the United Nations should play the lead role in their resolution. Some introspection and, thereafter, discussion, would therefore be useful on the part of all Members of the United Nations to ensure that all the main organs of

the United Nations work in accordance with the specific mandates assigned to them under the Charter, with a view to ensuring peace, progress and prosperity for the peoples of the world.

Before I conclude, I should like to make one final remark on the procedure of open debates. Pakistan has participated in this debate in order to convey its views to the Security Council. I understand, however, that the Security Council has already approved a draft presidential statement on this subject which you, Mr. President, will be reading out after this meeting. Thus, the views expressed by non-members during this debate have not been taken into account. We believe that the Security Council needs to review this procedure, which reduces this debate to a sterile exercise in speech-making. We would like to suggest that informal consultations by members of the Security Council should in future be held after its meetings which are open to participation by non-members, so that the views of non-members can also be taken into consideration in the formulation of presidential statements and resolutions of the Security Council.

The President: I thank the representative of Pakistan for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Ukraine. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Krokhmal (Ukraine): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your effective ongoing presidency of the Security Council this current month, and to welcome this opportunity to address the role of the Security Council in the prevention of armed conflicts.

Today, just a few weeks away from the third millennium, we can hardly state that one of the primary aims of this Organization — "to save the succeeding generations from the scourge of war" — has been fully accomplished. Despite all of the protracted efforts of the United Nations to that end, the reported figures for casualties in armed conflicts are horrific. We continue to see mass violations of human rights, as well as economic, social and cultural devastation. Furthermore, in the current period of the post-cold war, intra-State conflicts have largely outnumbered inter-State ones.

The roots of armed conflict are numerous and complex. They can be traced to, among other things, certain historical events, existing economic and social hardship, lack of good governance and long-standing inter-ethnic and inter-religious intolerance. At the same time, there is a growing perception within the international community that armed conflicts are not unavoidable and that the costliest peace is better than the cheapest war. As the Secretary-General underlined in his 1999 report on the work of the Organization, our common challenge is to uphold the imperative of the transition from a culture of reaction to existing conflicts to a culture of prevention.

We are of the view that strengthening the commitment to a policy of conflict prevention would hardly be possible without the Security Council playing a leading role. The Council continues to bear primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

There is scepticism about the current capabilities of the Council with respect to the entire spectrum of preventive measures, from preventive diplomacy to preventive deployment and disarmament. In our view, that scepticism is surely not without foundation.

Members will recall that the evolution of United Nations peace support practice over the past decade has also highlighted the need for further development of the concept of conflict prevention. "An Agenda for Peace", submitted by the Secretary-General in 1992, and its Supplement of 1995 provided a solid theoretical basis for strengthening the capacity of the United Nations to maintain international peace and security, including the concept of preventive diplomacy and peacemaking. Ukraine has supported that process and has taken an active part in the work of the four sub-groups of the General Assembly's Informal Open-ended Working Group on An Agenda for Peace. We feel it was regrettable that the discussion in the sub-group on preventive diplomacy and peacemaking did not lead to agreement on a document on definitions, guiding principles and measures for such activities.

Ukraine believes that differences on the whole spectrum of preventive measures can be bridged. We hope that this meeting of the Security Council will give impetus to the resumption of efforts to successfully complete work on the concept and strategies of the prevention of armed conflicts. In particular, it might well be useful to define the criteria for the engagement of multilateral capacities for early warning, prevention and resolution of conflicts. Ukraine considers that, unless such criteria take account of the views of the international community, no military preventive action should be authorized by the Security Council without the consent of

the State concerned. Ukraine looks forward to participating in further discussion on this subject. Clearly, the Security Council should not hesitate to employ existing mechanisms and instruments to prevent conflicts in areas of tension, including operations carried out under a preventive deployment mandate and with the consent of the State concerned.

We are pleased to note the success of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force, the Organization's mission to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, which is one of a kind in the history of the United Nations. In our view, the unique and successful experience of that mission continues to grow in importance. We are confident that the United Nations will gain through this experience in its efforts to support international peace and security.

It is of critical importance that the Security Council consider how it should deal with conflict situations in any part of the world on an equal and indiscriminate footing. In that context, particular attention should be paid to the African continent, which requires the continuous and comprehensive assistance of the United Nations in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts. Ukraine welcomes the Security Council's increasing attention to the causes of conflicts and the promotion of peace and development in Africa. As an incoming member of the Council, Ukraine will do its best to maintain that trend.

My delegation is of the view that the Security Council would find itself in a much better position to defuse potential armed conflicts if it could rely on an enhanced United Nations rapid reaction capability. In this regard, Ukraine supports further development of the United Nations standby arrangements system and the earliest establishment of the Rapidly Deployable Mission Headquarters. This year marked five years since Ukraine declared its first military and civilian resources for United Nations standby arrangements. Over that period, Ukraine's contribution to that system has been doubled and has twice been diversified. In 1997 this work resulted in the signature of a memorandum of understanding with the United Nations on Ukraine's contribution to the system in the form of personnel and facilities.

We believe also that the Security Council should encourage the Secretariat to make more active use of all available instruments to undertake in a timely manner preventive diplomatic measures such as confidence building, early warning, fact finding, good offices, mediation, citizen diplomacy and so forth. We also believe that the mechanism of special representatives or envoys of the Secretary-General should be used more often.

We also welcome the ongoing activities of the Secretariat's Department of Political Affairs, as the focal point in the United Nations system for conflict prevention, in updating the roster of eminent and qualified experts of Member States to discharge missions of conflict prevention. The process of selecting appropriate candidates to be included in the roster is now under way in my country.

There could be further thinking about using the instrument of economic sanctions as a preventive measure by the Security Council vis-à-vis conflict-prone countries, to prevent them from plunging into violence and armed conflict. At the same time, the imposition of economic sanctions should be preceded by careful consideration of potential negative consequences for third countries.

My country maintains that cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in the field of the prevention of armed conflicts could be intensified on the basis of Chapter VIII of the Charter, provided that the key role of the Security Council remains unquestioned and unchallenged.

Since 1994 Ukraine has persistently advocated the establishment of a United Nations preventive mechanism for monitoring potential sources of conflicts in order to detect and avert in a timely manner situations that would require large-scale international military interference. We are confident that this difficult and ambitious task is a very topical one for the United Nations and its Security Council. We hope that today's open debate and the presidential statement that the Council is about to adopt will contribute effectively to the implementation of that task.

The President: I thank the representative of Ukraine for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Iraq. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Hasan (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish at the outset to express my deepest thanks to you, Mr. President, for your initiative to convene this open debate on the role of the Security Council in the prevention of armed conflicts.

Permit me to make a number of observations on this issue, because it is at the core of the current and future situation of the United Nations in particular and of international relations in general.

First of all, the United Nations was established with the purpose of promoting the economic and social advancement of all peoples through various means, among them the prevention of war through collective measures by the States Members of the United Nations.

The essential philosophy of the Charter for achieving this goal calls for mobilizing the efforts of the United Nations to create conditions of peace that do not allow conflicts to erupt. If conflicts do erupt, they can be resolved without resort to the use of force. The Charter assigns the Security Council specific functions in the maintenance of international peace and security. The Council is required to abide by this philosophy of the Charter and to use the measures prescribed by the Charter. In particular, it must be guided by the principle of the prevention of conflicts by using peaceful means and the avoidance of coercive measures, such as resort to force, and punitive measures, such as full-scale sanctions that kill civilians and destroy the fabric of societies. The Council must furthermore avoid the use of double standards or selectivity.

Second, regrettably, when viewing the Council's record in fulfilling this goal, we find that the picture is genuinely bleak. The last 10 years in particular have witnessed a serious deterioration in the credibility of the Council in its role of maintaining international peace and security.

There are two main reasons for this. One is the manipulation by the United States of the mechanisms of the Council to enforce its policies. As expressed by Mr. James Rubin, the former spokesman for the United States Secretary of State,

(spoke in English)

> "The U.N. could only do what the United States let it do".

(spoke in Arabic)

Anyone who needs proof of the hegemony of the United States over the Council need only review the positions of the Council vis-à-vis the issue of Iraq over the last 10 years, starting with the method that the United States followed to abort any peaceful resolution of the dispute between Iraq and Kuwait, then the forcing of the Security Council to impose total sanctions on Iraq four days after the events of 2 August 1990, then the way the United States implemented Security Council resolution 678 (1990) by transforming it into a cover for a systematic process of military destruction of all forms of life in Iraq. Along with these practices is the pressure exerted on members of the Security Council to join in adopting or supporting the United Kingdom/Netherlands draft resolution currently being debated in the Council. That draft resolution is aimed at rewriting the previous resolutions of the Security Council. It does not bring about the lifting of sanctions, or even their suspension, and imposes on Iraq new conditions and restrictions not provided for in the previous resolutions for an undetermined period. That draft resolution paves the way for a new aggression against Iraq.

The other reason for the deterioration of the credibility of the Security Council is that some countries have circumvented the Council's mandate and have used force without specific authorization by the Council in order to intervene in the internal affairs of States, thus threatening their security, sovereignty and independence. A case in point is the use of force by the United States and the United Kingdom against Iraq since 1991 in the illegal no-fly zones, the aggressions of 1993 and 1996 and the last, expanded aggression of 16 December 1998. The latest incident of the use of brutal force was the bombardment of a primary school in northern Iraq by United States aircraft two days ago, in which 10 civilians were wounded, including 4 children.

The position of the Security Council vis-à-vis these incidents of the use of force and other incidents that are classified by the Charter as acts of aggression was completely negative: the Council has not responded in any manner whatsoever. The Secretary-General was correct to point out in this year's report on the work of the Organization that measures of force, implemented without the permission of the Council, are basically a threat to the essence of the international security system established on the basis of the United Nations Charter.

Third, these facts indicate that the real starting point for activating the role of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security and the prevention of conflicts is primarily the radical reform of this body. The Security Council works on behalf of all the Member States of the United Nations. It must express their will and serve as a model of democracy and

transparency. The reform of the Council should be comprehensive. Its membership should be expanded and developing countries should be members of the Council in accordance with the principle of fair geographical representation. Its working methods, and particularly the decision-making process should also be reformed in a manner that fully respects the purposes and principles of the Charter in accordance with Article 24, paragraph 2. Also, the reforms should give the General Assembly and the International Court of Justice the right to hold the Council accountable for resolutions that are suspected to deviate from the principles of the Charter or for its impassivity before the violation by some States of the principles of the Charter.

Fourth, as we debate the prevention of conflicts between States and within States, a phenomenon that has spread in the last 10 years, we must first find the root causes of this problem and remedy its core instead of resorting to sedatives that have proved to be completely ineffective, if not negative.

The roots of most conflicts lie in poverty, lack of development inherited from a burdensome colonial legacy and the currently unbalanced international economic environment. The facts show that two thirds of the world's population is suffering from backwardness. A few live in prosperity and vast wealth. The world today is divided in two: the world of the rich and the world of the poor, worlds that are different in nearly every way. If we want to prevent conflicts, we need to look for a fair and balanced international economic policy that leads to greater equality between peoples and nations, reduces the level of social tensions, makes everyone a partner in building the world economy and reduces the gap between the rich and the poor. In this way we can preserve social peace within States and between States and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms, bringing about a better life for all peoples. As the Secretary-General pointed out in this year's report on the work of the Organization,

> "Funds currently spent on intervention and relief could be devoted to enhancing equitable and sustainable development instead, which would further reduce the risks of war and disaster." *(A/54/1, para. 22)*

Fifth, events have proven that ignoring the principle of settling international disputes by peaceful means leads to the scourge of war. This idea is based on the principle of refraining from the use of force or the threat of its use in international relations. Within this framework, the Security Council and the United Nations as a whole must discharge their role in rejecting the old security concept, which is based on military alliances and on the stockpiling of arms — weapons of mass destruction in particular — and which thereby increases the chances of these weapons being used at any time and in any region of the world. Rather, the Council and the United Nations as a whole should encourage the alternative, new approach to security based on mutual benefits, confidence-building, equality and cooperation.

In this regard, we must do more work in the field of disarmament, in accordance with the priorities set out in 1978 by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The permanent members of the Security Council — since they are members of the nuclear club and since they have special responsibilities for international peace and security — have a role to play in accelerating disarmament efforts. It is the permanent members' duty to undertake concrete measures to achieve nuclear disarmament, as well as the dismantling of all forms of weapons of mass destruction. Until we achieve nuclear disarmament, the nuclear-weapon States should make binding commitments to the non-nuclear-weapon States, safeguarding them from the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against them. This is particularly relevant since the safeguards discussed in Security Council resolution 984 (1995) are incapable of bringing about this goal.

Sixth, the Security Council should fulfil the obligations established in its resolutions concerning disarmament and the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. Operative paragraph 5 of Security Council resolution 487 (1981)

> "*Calls upon* Israel urgently to place its nuclear facilities under the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency".

Operative paragraph 14 of resolution 687 (1991), adopted in accordance with Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, stipulates that those disarmament actions required of Iraq that have already been implemented,

> "represent steps towards the goal of establishing in the Middle East a zone free from weapons of mass destruction".

As of this moment, the stipulations of these two paragraphs have yet to be enforced or implemented.

The fact that the Security Council has abandoned its responsibilities, as established by its own resolutions, has engendered new risks to peace and security in the Middle East region. This is because the expansionist Israeli entity possesses every kind of weapon of mass destruction.

Seventh, when looking for ways to promote the role of the Security Council in the prevention of conflicts, we have to be very careful as regards some concepts that are being marketed these days with the aim of abusing the mechanisms of the Security Council. Among these concepts is that of the preventive deployment of forces and that of humanitarian intervention.

The majority of United Nations Member States have opposed the latter concept because the Charter of the United Nations and international law make no provision for it; because it is alien to current norms of inter-State relations; and because of the likelihood that such a concept might be abused by those who interpret it subjectively and politically so as to justify aggression against the sovereignty of States. It would be truly deceitful to assume that we can protect human rights by means that ignore the principle of the equal sovereignty of all States.

I must state here that those who do all the talking about human rights do not have the best record in this area. For example, the United States, the leader of the so-called free world, does not guarantee the same rights to its rich and poor citizens. Despite its vast wealth, this country has more than a million homeless citizens living in such places as subway and train stations. Forty-three million of its citizens lack basic health care. The rate of child mortality among African-Americans is double that of white Americans. Furthermore, there are periodic outbreaks of ethnic conflicts and disturbances.

The United States record of violating the human rights of people outside its national borders is also well known. An example of this is how the United States, through its insistence on continuing comprehensive sanctions against Iraq, is depriving 24 million Iraqi citizens of their right to live a full life of dignity. This is genocide. In addition, the United States funds and arms a group of terrorists in order to destabilize the situation in Iraq, and it commits daily acts of aggression against Iraq.

Eighth, and finally, we believe that discussing the role of the Security Council in the prevention of armed conflicts must be part of a more comprehensive discussion of the international situation. This discussion should take note of the profound changes that are occurring in the world. It should seek to establish a new political and economic world order that rejects the concept of a single super-Power and the policies of force and hegemony and military alliances. Instead, it should seek to unite the North and the South in a joint endeavour to achieve comprehensive development and to promote a world based on justice, equality, peaceful coexistence and the proper implementation of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The President: I thank the representative of Iraq for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Croatia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Šimonović (Croatia): It is my distinct pleasure to thank Ambassador Danilo Türk once again for organizing this discussion in his capacity as President of the Security Council. Throughout its entire membership term, and especially as the Council President, Slovenia has proved that neither the mere size of a Member State nor its geographical location in the vicinity of a conflict or post-conflict zone precludes a Member State from making a major contribution to peace and security on the world stage.

This open debate on the role of the Security Council in the prevention of armed conflicts continues the successful practice of opening up the Council to non-member States, and we are grateful to Slovenia for this valuable opportunity.

In order to protect human life, we must consider every investment in building or strengthening early-warning systems, preventive disarmament, protocols and skills for the peaceful settlement of conflicts or for preventive deployment, to name just a few.

An investment in a longer-term and sustainable strategy for the prevention of conflicts calls for a comprehensive recognition, examination and understanding of and action upon a multitude of causes of contemporary threats to peace and security. What is occurring in a seemingly remote corner of the globe sooner or later becomes relevant to all of us. We all must give and take in order to protect our principal value: each and every human life on this planet. How do we do that?

The sovereign equality of States has traditionally been a cornerstone of international relations.

Interdependence makes a reduction in the sovereignty of States a rational choice. However, in reducing sovereignty, only respect for the fundamental principle of the equality of States can provide sufficiently broad support for this rational transformation of international relations.

A common curse that bedevils all prevention in any field boils down to the resistance to commit resources in advance to an invisible or underdeveloped threat. We must find a way and develop rational procedures to deal with such irrational resistances. I entirely agree with all earlier participants in this discussion who emphasized that, in international relations, investments made in prevention are the least costly.

Croatia assigns particular importance to the prevention of the recurrence of armed conflicts. This phenomenon remains closely linked both to unfinished business regarding the conflict's causes, as well as to inadequate or missing programmes for post-conflict peace-building.

Even a superficial review of several conflict and post-conflict zones of the current decade in Africa and Europe reveals the fact that preventive action is required before as well as after the conflict has arisen, when it takes the form of a post-conflict settlement. It further suggests that the commitment of the international community must be coordinated and sustained over time. It must also be comprehensive in order to address economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems, each and every one of which, if left unattended, can ignite or reignite the conflict.

Two examples from our region demonstrate this very point. First, eight years following the dissolution of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the succession issue of the former federal State is yet to be settled and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia still refuses to accept existing borders and the equality of all successor States. Secondly, following eight Security Council resolutions dealing exclusively with the Prevlaka issue in Croatia and eight extensions of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Prevlaka (UNMOP) mandate, the issue remains unresolved because the applicable international law lacks enforcement.

The issues of law and justice figure prominently on the agenda of intervention before and after a conflict. The ad hoc International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, established by the Security Council, were designed to accomplish the extremely important mission of prosecuting war criminals and, by punishing individual perpetrators, of personalizing guilt and responsibility and assisting in post-conflict healing and the reconciliation process. A different, but complementary role has been played by truth and reconciliation commissions elsewhere. In short, the culture of preventing armed conflicts calls for serious commitment to historical demystification. This commitment can then sustain and build upon the investments of the international community in reconstruction, economic growth and development, civil society and good governance.

In this regard, within the United Nations framework, the role of the Security Council in building the culture of prevention complements that of the Economic and Social Council. Indeed, the Economic and Social Council, with its broad agenda concerning economic and social development and the eradication of poverty, remains best equipped both to identify in a timely manner the root causes of potential conflicts and voice early warnings, as well as to act pre-emptively upon these very causes of new or recurrent conflicts.

As Croatia assumes its membership in the Economic and Social Council, I would like to use this opportunity to pledge our very best efforts to focus on the prevention of the root causes of conflicts, and I call on the Security Council and its members to continue to build closer formal and informal ties with the Economic and Social Council. This may include such measures as regular joint briefings as well as occasional joint meetings of these two principal United Nations organs.

The President: I thank the representative of Croatia for his kind words addressed to me and my delegation.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Slovenia.

The delegation of Slovenia is pleased that the Security Council has decided to undertake a systematic consideration of its role in the prevention of armed conflicts. The discussion yesterday and today has offered an impressive array of interesting and useful ideas, which will inspire the future work of the Security Council. We are grateful to the Secretary-General for his thoughtful introduction and for his consistent efforts to strengthen the culture of prevention in the work of the United Nations.

The issues of the prevention of armed conflicts are not new for the United Nations. Ever since the entry into force of the United Nations Charter and the first practical

steps of the Organization, the prevention of armed conflicts has been one of its primary purposes. A number of provisions in the Charter, starting with its Preamble and Article 1, express the will of the United Nations to save peoples from the scourge of war and to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace. The Charter also provides a concrete normative framework for preventive strategies and action by the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the International Court of Justice and, very prominently, the Secretary-General.

From a normative perspective, therefore, the prevention of armed conflicts very clearly represents a *raison d'être* of the United Nations. However, seen from the historical perspective, it becomes clear that the normative expectations and the political potential of the Organizations do not suffice. The past decades have witnessed inaction, excessive caution and blockages resulting from the prevalence of the short-term national interest. The cold-war era established a set of constraints which have gravely hampered the United Nations preventive action.

It was not surprising, therefore, that, in "An Agenda for Peace", which heralded the post-cold-war era, the former Secretary-General emphasized the importance of preventive diplomacy. The Security Council supported that approach at that time and placed particular accent on fact-finding. The practice of focusing on the role of the Secretary-General's special envoys and representatives expanded. However, the serious setbacks which affected the work of the United Nations in the first half of this decade also diminished hopes for and the potential of preventive action. In his "Supplement to an Agenda for Peace" in January 1995, the former Secretary-General voiced disappointment with the actual behaviour of States. He noted, in paragraph 28 of that report in document S/1995/1, that States collectively encourage the Secretary-General to play an active and preventive role, while individually they are often reluctant to do so when they are involved themselves. Since it is impossible to impose a change on sovereign States, the Secretary-General concluded, the solution was only a long-term one linked to an adequate climate of opinion or ethos within the international community.

The discussion yesterday and today has been an important device for the gradual creation of such an opinion or ethos. In general, the debate has reaffirmed support for a proactive, prevention-oriented Security Council. However, there have also been expressions of concern for the sovereignty of States, some of which, in my opinion, went beyond the actual needs. The United Nations and its Members must be careful not to impose limitations on preventive action, which in their final effect harm both the United Nations and its sovereign Member States. On the other hand, expressions of excessive concern cannot blur the generally supportive context of the discussion. I am particularly encouraged that the views of the members of the Security Council offered a balanced and forward-looking approach.

The draft presidential statement proposed for adoption today summed up the consensus views of the Security Council members, which reflect the will to advance a comprehensive and viable platform for action of the Security Council in the future.

In this context, I wish to underline two aspects of such a platform. The first is its clear recognition that preventive strategies and action have to be developed by all United Nations organs and agencies. This is necessary if the international community is to be effective in addressing the wide variety of causes of military conflicts. Poverty, social injustice and massive violations of human rights are among the most obvious causes of armed conflicts. They need to be addressed through appropriate international institutions. Those institutions cannot claim success if they are not able to devise policies which contribute to the elimination of poverty, prevent social disintegration and strengthen the base of implementation of human rights. This applies equally to the current conference of the World Trade Organization, as much as it applies to the work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and other organs and agencies in the field of human rights.

My second general remark relates more directly to the work of the Security Council, which has a special responsibility in conflict prevention. It has to be understood that the powers of the Security Council are most often used in situations of imminent armed conflict — that is, at a point of particular sensitivity and risk. In such circumstances, the States and others involved can be and often are even more reluctant to accept the intervention of the Security Council. The argument of preservation of sovereignty can be used irrationally, even with the effect of the actual endangering of sovereignty in a potential armed conflict which could have been prevented by a timely action of the Security Council.

Fortunately, there have been positive examples in the past years which have demonstrated the advantages of timely action of the Security Council, both for the prevention of armed conflicts and for the preservation of sovereignty. The case of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) in Macedonia is the clearest example. Macedonia has managed to preserve peace and sovereignty largely due to the timely action of the Security Council, which agreed, upon the request of the wise leadership of that country, to dispatch a preventive force to Macedonia.

Another and somewhat different example from the recent past proves the same point. The Security Council's mission to Jakarta and Dili last September clearly contributed to the prevention of a very dangerous threat of escalation of an armed conflict and helped create conditions which have eased tensions around East Timor. This has made it easier for Indonesia to pursue its own agenda of reforms, which are necessary for the preservation and enhancement of the country's sovereignty.

These and other examples speak in favour of a proactive role of the Security Council. That role should, in our opinion, include a more active use of the powers of the Security Council, such as those enshrined in Article 34 of the Charter, relating to international disputes, and those of Article 40, relating to taking provisional measures intended to prevent aggravation of a situation which already requires action by the Council under Chapter VII of the Charter.

The question of how proactive the Security Council can be and wishes to be is obviously a sensitive one. However, in pondering this question in the context of a specific situation in the future, the Council should consider carefully the distribution of roles between the Council itself, the Secretary-General and regional organizations. The Council is not strengthened in its relevance if it leaves its actual role to the others. Several speakers yesterday and today have addressed the sensitive issue of cooperation between the United Nations and various regional and subregional organizations and arrangements. A balanced approach is clearly needed. Moreover, the Security Council must seek such an approach with a full awareness of its own responsibilities under the Charter and of the need to ensure its central role by wise decision and meaningful action. In general, a proactive Council has a fair chance to be seen as a wise and meaningful Council.

In conclusion, I wish to state once again my delegation's satisfaction with this useful debate. We hope that its content and the presidential statement will successfully guide the work of the Security Council in the future.

I now resume my function as President of the Security Council.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The next meeting of the Security Council to continue consideration of the item will be held immediately following the adjournment of the present meeting.

The meeting rose at 2.15 p.m.